

REMARKS

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration give to this application. Claims 1-28 are pending in the present case. The Examiner has restricted claims in the application into three distinct inventions designated as Group I, claims 1-11, 15-17, 19 and 21-28 drawn to a sintered porous composite material usable as a filter element, an apparatus for removing contaminants from a fluid stream, and a method for removing material from a fluid, Group II claims 12-14 drawn to a method for making a porous composite material, and Group III claims 18 and 20, drawn to a supercritical fluid.

In order to be fully responsive, Applicant has elected the invention of Group I as defined by claims 1-11, 15-17 and 21-28. Applicant expressly reserves the right to present claims 12-44 of Group II and claims 18 and 20 of Group III, or other claims, in one or more divisional, continuation, or continuation-in-part applications at a later date. By this election, Applicant does not admit, nor does Applicant waive the right to argue against at a later date, the Examiner's statement that the groups of inventions are patentably distinct.

In view of the above remarks, Applicants believe that the application is in condition for examination and/or allowance on the merits.

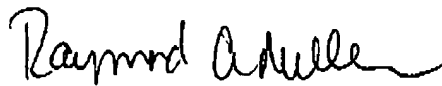
126457.00101

Patent

This response has been timely filed. Accordingly, no fee is required. In the event that a fee is required for this response, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 50-0436.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, or need any additional information from Applicant's attorney, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at their convenience.

Respectfully submitted,



Raymond A. Miller
Reg. No. 42,891

Date: February 10, 2005

Pepper Hamilton LLP
One Mellon Center, 50th Floor
500 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
(412) 454-5000